

AUCTION

UNDER THE LAWS OF 1915



By
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"Whist of Today," "Auction of Today",
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PHILADELPHIA
THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
1915

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INTRODUCTION

The action of the Whist Club of New York in issuing under date of June, 1915, a new code of Auction Laws containing many radical changes is bound to materially alter the game in this country.

As every player will wish to have a copy of these laws in his possession so that he may become familiar with the requirements of the new game, it has seemed desirable to furnish the code in a form which permits it to be easily carried in the pocket. That is the main object of this booklet.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the courtesy of the Whist Club in allowing the prompt publication of its new laws in this manner.

At the time these laws were adopted the club requested the chairman of the committee that had drafted them to

issue a statement explaining the character of the changes and why they were made. This statement, very hastily prepared, appeared in a number of newspapers on June 13, 1915.

As the designation of the alterations facilitates the examination of the new laws, this statement has been revised, consideration of several alterations that were not a part of the original article has been added and it is published herein as supplementary to the laws.

While every effort has been made to produce this little book in the most concise form, it has not seemed that it would be complete without a brief comment upon the effect the new laws will have upon the declarer. A short discussion upon that topic is therefore added.

PHILADELPHIA, June 15, 1915.

THE LAWS OF AUCTION

(Adopted by the Whist Club of New York,
June, 1915)

THE RUBBER

1. A rubber continues until one side wins two games. When the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

SCORING

2. Each side has a trick score and a score for all other counts, generally known as the honor score. In the trick score the only entries made are points for tricks won (see Law 3), which count both toward the game and in the total of the rubber.

All other points, including honors, penalties, slam, little slam, and undertricks, are recorded in the honor score, which counts only in the total of the rubber.

3. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid or more, each above six counts on the trick score: six points when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when spades are trumps, and ten when the declaration is no trump.

4. A game consists of thirty points made by tricks alone. Every deal is played out, whether or not during it the game be concluded, and any points made (even if in excess of thirty) are counted.

5. The ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of the trump suit are the honors; when no trump is declared, the aces are the honors.

6. Honors are credited to the original holders; they are valued as follows:

WHEN A TRUMP IS DECLARED

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 3* | honors held between partners | equal value of 2 tricks | |
| 4 | " " " " " " | " " 4 " | |
| 5 | " " " " " " | " " 5 " | |
| 4 | " in 1 hand | " " 8 | |
| 4 | " " 1 " { 5th in partner's hand | | |
| 5 | " " 1 " { " " 10 | | |

WHEN NO TRUMP IS DECLARED

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------|
| 3 | aces held between partners | count 30 |
| 4 | " " " " " " | " 40 |
| 4 | " " in one hand | " 100 |

7. Slam is made when partners take thirteen tricks.† It counts 100 points in the honor score.

8. Little slam is made when partners take twelve tricks.‡ It counts 50 points in the honor score.

9. The value of honors, slam, or little

* Frequently called "simple honors "

† Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring slam and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained.

‡ Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring little slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a little slam not otherwise obtained. When a declarer bids 7 and takes twelve tricks he counts 50 for little slam, although his declaration fails.

slam, is not affected by doubling or redoubling.

10. At the end of a rubber the side that has won two games scores a bonus of 250 points.

The trick, honor and bonus scores of each side are then added and the size of the rubber is the difference between the respective totals.

The side having the higher score wins the rubber.

11. When a rubber is started with the agreement that the play shall terminate (*i. e.*, no new deal shall commence) at a specified time, and the rubber is unfinished at that hour, the score is made up as it stands, 125 being added to the score of the winners of a game. A deal if started must be finished.

12. A proved error in the honor score may be corrected at any time before the

score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proved error in the trick score may be corrected at any time before a declaration has been made in the following game, or, if it occur in the final game of the rubber, before the score has been made up and agreed upon.

CUTTING

14. In cutting the ace is the lowest card; between cards of otherwise equal value the spade is the lowest, the heart next, the diamond next, and the club the highest.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut.

FORMING TABLES

17. Those first in the room have the prior right to play. Candidates of equal

standing decide their order by cutting; those who cut lowest play first.

18. Six players constitute a complete table.

19. After the table has been formed, the players cut to decide upon partners, the two lower play against the two higher. The lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having made his selection, must abide by it.*

20. The right to succeed players as they retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcements, in the order made, entitle candidates to fill vacancies as they occur.

CUTTING OUT

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission be claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players who have played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers

* He may consult his partner before making his decision.

withdraw; when all have played the same number, they cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.*

RIGHT OF ENTRY

22. At the end of a rubber a candidate is not entitled to enter a table unless he declare his intention before any player cut, either for partners, for a new rubber, or for cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at an existing table have the prior right of entry. Others decide their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, which cannot be formed without him or them, he or they shall be the last to cut out.

25. A player belonging to one table who enters another, or announces a desire to do

* See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.

so, forfeits his rights at his original table, unless the new table cannot be formed without him, in which case he may retain his position at his original table by announcing his intention to return as soon as his place at the new table can be filled.

26. Should a player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment becomes void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and does not in any way affect the rights of the substitute.

27. If a player break up a table, the others have a prior right of entry elsewhere.

SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so the face of any card be seen.

29. The dealer's partner must collect the cards from the preceding deal and has the

right to shuffle first. Each player has the right to shuffle subsequently. The dealer has the right to shuffle last, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling or while giving the pack to be cut, he must reshuffle.

30. After shuffling, the cards, properly collected, must be placed face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the end of the current deal.

THE DEAL

31. Players deal in turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. Immediately before the deal, the player on the dealer's right cuts, so that each packet contains at least four cards. If, in or after cutting, and prior to the beginning of the deal, a card be exposed, or if any doubt exist as to the place of

the cut, the dealer must reshuffle and the same player must cut again.

33. After the pack has been properly cut, it should not be reshuffled or recut except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle after the cut, his adversaries may also shuffle and the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards must be dealt face downward. The deal is completed when the last card is dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal, the same pack must be dealt again by the same player.

A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal:

- (a) If the cards be not dealt, beginning at the dealer's left, into four packets one at a time and in regular rotation.
- (b) If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack be proved incorrect.
- (c) If, during a deal, any card be faced in the pack or exposed, on, above, or below the table.

- (d) If more than thirteen cards be dealt to any player.*
- (e) If the last card do not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- (f) If the dealer omit having the pack cut, deal out of turn or with the adversaries' cards, and either adversary call attention to the fact before the end of the deal and before looking at any of his cards.

38. Should a correction of any offence mentioned in 37 *f* not be made in time, or should an adversary who has looked at any of his cards be the first to call attention to the error, the deal stands, and the game proceeds as if the deal had been correct, the player to the left dealing the next. When the deal has been with the wrong cards, the next dealer may take whichever pack he prefers.

39. If, prior to the cut for the following deal, a pack be proved incorrect, the deal is void, but all prior scores stand.†

* This error, whenever discovered, renders a new deal necessary.

† A correct pack contains exactly fifty-two cards, one of each denomination.

The pack is not incorrect when a missing card or cards are found in the other pack, among the quitted tricks, below the table, or in any other place which makes it possible that such card or cards were part of the pack during the deal.

40. Should three players have their proper number of cards, the fourth less, the missing card or cards, if found, belong to him, and he, unless dummy, is answerable for any established revoke or revokes he may have made just as if the missing card or cards had been continuously in his hand. When a card is missing, any player may search the other pack, the quitted tricks, or elsewhere for it.*

If before, during, or at the conclusion of play, one player hold more than the proper number of cards, and another less, the deal is void.

* The fact that a deal is concluded without any claim of irregularity shall be deemed as conclusive that such card was part of the pack during the deal.

41. A player may not cut, shuffle, or deal for his partner if either adversary object.

41a. A player may not lift from the table and look at any of his cards until the end of the deal. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score for each card so examined.

THE DECLARATION

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must either pass or declare to win at least one odd trick,* either with a specified suit, or at no trump.

43. The dealer having declared or passed, each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, must pass, make a higher declaration, double the last declaration made by an opponent, or redouble an opponent's double, subject to the provisions of Law 54.

* One trick more than six.

44. When all four players pass their first opportunity to declare, the deal passes to the next player.

45. The order in value of declarations from the lowest up is clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, no trump.

To overcall a declaration, a player must bid, either

- (a) An equal number of tricks of a more valuable declaration or
- (b) A greater number of tricks.

E. g., 3 spades over 3 diamonds; 5 clubs over 4 hearts; 4 diamonds over 3 no trump.

46. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.

47. The player who makes the final declaration* must play the combined hands,

* A declaration becomes final when it has been passed by three players.

his partner becoming dummy, unless the suit or no trump finally declared was bid by the partner before it was called by the final declarer, in which case the partner, no matter what bids have intervened, must play the combined hands.

48. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Law 3).*

48a. When the declarer fails to win as many tricks as he declares, neither he nor his adversaries score anything toward the game, but his adversaries score in their honor column 50 points for each undertrick (*i. e.*, each trick short of the number declared). If the declaration be doubled, the adversaries score 100 points; if redoubled, 200 points for each undertrick.

49. If a player make a declaration (other

* For amount scored by declarer, if doubled, see Law 53 and 56.

than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, may treat such declaration as void, or may allow such declaration to stand. In the last case the bidding shall continue as if the declarations had been in turn. A pass out of turn, or a bid declared void, does not affect the order of bidding, *i. e.*, it is still the turn of the player to the left of the previous declarer. The player who has bid out of turn may re-enter the bidding in his proper turn without penalty, but when he has passed out of his turn, he may only do so in case the declaration he has passed is overbid or doubled.

If a declaration out of turn be made and the proper declarer then bid, such bid shall be construed as an election that the declaration out of turn is to be treated as void.

50. If a player make an insufficient declaration, either adversary may demand

that it be made sufficient in the declaration named, in which case the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double.

50a. If a player who has been debarred from bidding under Laws 50 or 65, during the period of such prohibition, make any declaration (other than passing), either adversary may decide whether such declaration stand, and neither the offending player nor his partner may further participate in the bidding even if the adversaries double or declare.

50b. A penalty for a declaration out of turn (see Law 49), an insufficient declaration (see Law 50), or a bid when prohibited (see Law 50a) may not be enforced if either adversary pass, double, or declare before the penalty be demanded.*

* When the penalty for an insufficient declaration is not demanded, the bid over which it was made may be repeated unless some higher bid has intervened.

50c. Laws which give to either adversary the right to enforce a penalty, do not permit unlimited consultation. Either adversary may call attention to the offence and select the penalty, or may say, "Partner, you determine the penalty," or words to that effect. Any other consultation is prohibited,* and if it take place the right to demand any penalty is lost. The first decision made by either adversary is final and cannot be altered.

51. At any time during the declaration, a question asked by a player concerning any previous bid must be answered, but, after the final declaration has been accepted, if an adversary of the declarer inform his partner regarding any previous declaration, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy give such information to the declarer, either adversary of the declarer

* The question "Partner, will you select the penalty; or shall I?" is a form of consultation which is not permitted.

may call a lead when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand. A player, however, at any time may ask what declaration is being played and the question must be answered.

52. A pass or double once made may not be altered.

No declaration may be altered after the next player acts.

Before action by the next player a no trump or suit declaration may be changed

- (a) To correct the amount of an insufficient bid.
- (b) To correct the denomination but not the size of a bid in which, due to a lapsus linguæ, a suit or no trump has been called which the declarer did not intend to name.

No other alteration may be made.

DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

53. Doubling and redoubling doubles and quadruples the value of each trick over six, but it does not alter the value of a declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three

clubs" is higher than "two spades" doubled or redoubled.

54. Any declaration may be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player may not double his partner's declaration, nor redouble his partner's double, but he may redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

The penalty for redoubling more than once is 100 points in the adverse honor score or a new deal; for doubling a partner's declaration, or redoubling a partner's double it is 50 points in the adverse honor score. Either adversary may demand any penalty enforceable under this law.

55. Doubling or redoubling reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any one of the three succeeding players, including the player whose declaration has been doubled, may, in his proper turn, make a further declaration of higher value.

56. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of 50 points in his honor score, and a further 50 points for each additional trick. When he or his partner has redoubled, he scores 100 points for making the contract and an additional 100 for each extra trick.

57. A double or redouble is a declaration, and a player who doubles or redoubles out of turn is subject to the penalty provided by Law 49.

58. After the final declaration has been accepted, the play begins; the player on the left of the declarer leads.

DUMMY*

59. As soon as the player on the left of the declarer leads, the declarer's partner places his cards face upward on the table,

* For additional laws affecting dummy, see 51 and 93.

and the declarer plays the cards from that hand.

60. The partner of the declarer has all the rights of a player (including the right to call attention to a lead from the wrong hand), until his cards are placed face upward on the table.* He then becomes the dummy, and takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:

- (a) To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;
- (b) to correct an improper claim of either adversary;
- (c) to call attention to a trick erroneously taken by either side;
- (d) to participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;
- (e) to correct an erroneous score;
- (f) to consult with and advise the declarer as to which penalty to exact for a revoke;
- (g) to ask the declarer whether he have any of a suit he has renounced.

* The penalty is determined by the declarer (see Law 66).

The dummy, if he have not intentionally looked at any card in the hand of a player, has also the following additional rights:

- (h) To call the attention of the declarer to an established adverse revoke;
- (i) to call the attention of the declarer to a card exposed by an adversary or to an adverse lead out of turn.

61. Should the dummy call attention to any other incident in the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer may not exact such penalty. Should the dummy avail himself of rights (h) or (i), after intentionally looking at a card in the hand of a player, the declarer may not exact any penalty for the offence in question.

62. If the dummy, by touching a card or otherwise, suggest the play of one of his cards, either adversary may require the declarer to play or not to play such card.

62a. If the dummy call to the attention of the declarer that he is about to lead

from the wrong hand, either adversary may require that the lead be made from that hand.

63. Dummy is not subject to the revoke penalty; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick be turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the revoke may not be corrected.

64. A card from the declarer's hand is not played until actually quitted, but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is played unless he say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which to play.

CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY

65. After the deal and before the declaration has been finally determined, if any player lead or expose a card, his partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration,* and the card, if it be-

* See Law 50a.

long to an adversary of the eventual declarer, is subject to call.* When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarer may also prohibit the initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

66. After the final declaration has been accepted and before the lead, if the partner of the proper leader expose or lead a card, the declarer may treat it as exposed or may call a suit from the proper leader. A card exposed by the leader, after the final declaration and before the lead, is subject to call.

CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY

67. After the original lead, all cards exposed by the declarer's adversaries are liable to be called and must be left face upward on the table.

68. The following are exposed cards:

- (1) Two or more cards played simultaneously;

* If more than one card be exposed, all may be called.

- (2) a card dropped face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named;
- (3) a card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face;
- (4) a card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

69. A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table, or so held that it is seen by an adversary but not by the partner, is not an exposed card.

70. Two or more cards played simultaneously by either of the declarer's adversaries give the declarer the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick and to treat the other card or cards as exposed.

70a. Should an adversary of the declarer expose his last card before his partner play to the twelfth trick, the two cards in his partner's hand become exposed, must be laid face upward on the table, and are subject to call.

71. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and dummy and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks. The other cards thus improperly played are exposed.

72. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards face upward on the table, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. He is not then allowed to call

any cards his adversaries may have exposed, nor to take any finesse not previously proven a winner unless he announce it when making his claim.

73. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86, and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit, he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 66, 76, and 93), or if, when called upon to win or lose a trick, he fail to do so when he can (Laws 71, 80, and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, he fail to play as directed (Laws 65 and 66), he is liable to the penalty for revoke (Law 84) unless such play be corrected before the trick be turned and quitted.

74. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

75. The call of an exposed card may be repeated until it be played.

LEADS OUT OF TURN

76. If either adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, the declarer may either treat the card so led as exposed or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead. Should they lead simultaneously, the lead from the proper hand stands, and the other card is exposed.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or dummy, he incurs no penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary.* If the second hand play, the lead is accepted.

78. If an adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, and the declarer follow either from his own hand or dummy, the trick stands. If the declarer before playing refuse to accept the lead, the leader may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

* The rule in Law 50c as to consultations governs the right of adversaries to consult as to whether such direction be given.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR

80. Should the fourth hand, not being dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be required to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick. In such case, if the second hand be void of the suit led, the declarer in lieu of any other penalty may call upon the second hand to play the highest card of any designated suit. If he name a suit of which the second hand is void, the penalty is paid.*

81. If any one, except dummy, omit playing to a trick, and such error be not corrected until he has played to the next, the adversaries or either of them may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal stand, the surplus card (at the end

* Should the declarer play third hand before the second hand, the fourth hand may without penalty play before his partner.

of the hand) is considered played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.*

82. When any one, except dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may make. When the error is detected during the play, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and such card or cards restored to the original holder.†

THE REVOKE‡

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke when the

* As to the right of adversaries to consult, see Law 50c.

† Either adversary may decide which card shall be considered played to the trick which contains more than four cards.

‡ See Law 73.

trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winners (*i. e.*, the hand removed from the trick after it has been turned face downward on the table), or when either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, leads or plays to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:

- (a) When the declarer revokes, he cannot score for tricks and his adversaries add 100 points to their score in the honor column, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revokes, the declarer may either add 100 points to his score in the honor column or take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own.* Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but shall not entitle him to score any bonus in the honor column in case the declaration has been doubled or redoubled,

* The dummy may advise the declarer which penalty to exact

nor to a slam or little slam not otherwise obtained.*

- (c) When, during the play of a deal, more than one revoke is made by the same side, the penalty for each revoke after the first is 100 points.

The value of their honors is the only score that can be made by a revoking side.

85. A player may ask his partner if he have a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick be turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

85a. Should the dummy leave the table during the play, he may ask his adversaries to protect him from revokes during his absence; such protection is generally called

* The value of the three tricks, doubled or redoubled, as the case may be, is counted in the trick score.

“the courtesies of the table” or “the courtesies due an absentee.”

If he make such request the penalty may not be enforced for a revoke made by the declarer during the dummy's absence unless in due season an adversary have asked the declarer whether he have a card of the suit he has renounced.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may withdraw his or their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault be one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed, and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases, or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick.

86a. If the player in fault be the declarer, either adversary may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the

suit in which he has renounced, provided both his adversaries have played to the current trick; but this penalty may not be exacted from the declarer when he is fourth in hand, nor can it be enforced at all from the dummy.

87. At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honors. In such case, if one side revoke more than once,

the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side.

GENERAL LAWS

90. A trick turned and quitted may not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the play. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before the trick is turned and quitted, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. When an adversary of the declarer, before his partner plays, calls attention to the trick, either by saying it is his, or, without being requested to do so, by naming his card or drawing it toward him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. An adversary of the declarer may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy similarly offend, either adversary may call a suit when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

NEW CARDS

95. Unless a pack be imperfect, no player has the right to call for one new pack. When fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. When they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries of

the player demanding them have the choice of the new cards. If it be the beginning of a new rubber, the dealer, whether he or one of his adversaries call for the new cards, has the choice. New cards cannot be substituted after the pack has been cut for a new deal.

96. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

BYSTANDERS

97. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exaction of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION

In the game of Auction slight intimations convey much information. The code succinctly states laws which fix penalties for an offence. To offend against etiquette is far more serious than to offend against a law; for in the latter case the offender is subject to the prescribed penalties; in the former his adversaries are without redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "one heart," "one no trump," "pass," "double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.

2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not show by word or gesture the nature of his hand, or his pleasure or displeasure at a play, bid, or double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. An opponent of the declarer should not lead until the preceding trick has been turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A card should not be played with such emphasis as to draw attention to it, nor should a player detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Conversation during the play should be avoided, as it may annoy players at the table or at other tables in the room.

8. The dummy should not leave his seat to watch his partner play. He should not call attention to the score nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold.

9. If a player say, "I have the rest," or

any words indicating that the remaining tricks, or any number thereof, are his, and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play.

10. If a player concede, in error, one or more tricks, the concession should stand.

11. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission in another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.

WHAT THE CHANGES ARE AND WHY THEY HAVE BEEN MADE

The 1915 code of Auction Laws, adopted by the Whist Club of New York, varies in a number of very important respects from any of its predecessors.

Some of the changes are quite radical and yet the Club cannot be accused of abandoning its well-established principle of conservatism, as there is much that has not been touched that the Committee has been earnestly asked to alter by players whose opinions have deserved and received the highest consideration.

The new code is offered with the sincere hope that it may meet the popular demand and be universally adopted by clubs and individuals all over the United States.

The Whist Club is encouraged in cher-

ishing this hope by assurances already received from many of the most prominent Auction playing organizations of the country that, as far as they are concerned, the new laws will be adopted as soon as issued.

The previous code issued by the Whist Club (November, 1913) was at first generally followed in all parts of the United States. Then the Portland Club of London promulgated its laws, which were universally adopted in England and on the Continent and which included some very marked changes.

Some of these new features appealed to many Americans and gradually became very popular in this country. This started the spirit of unrest, and consequently, during the early part of 1915, the Whist Club was strenuously urged to promulgate a new code which would meet the altered condition of the Auction mind. It was also flooded with suggestions, a few

of them unquestionably of great value, as to how the laws should be amended.

During that period some clubs, answering the demands of impatient members who were unwilling to wait for the Whist Club to act, promulgated laws of their own and in consequence the greatest confusion resulted.

In certain cities the method of playing the game varied in different clubs but a few blocks apart; visitors were thereby seriously handicapped, and in social games it often was necessary to delay the start until a series of such questions as, "Are we playing Spades?" was determined.

This state of affairs produced a veritable Auction Babel and, realizing that under such conditions the game could not and would not maintain its popularity, many clubs and individuals requested the Whist Club to hasten the announcement of the code which, it was generally understood,

was in the course of preparation and would, in accordance with the Club's custom, be made public in the fall.

The Club, fully appreciating the exigencies of the situation, curtailed its deliberations and the new laws were announced in June instead of in September.

In drafting this code the Metropolitan organization has borne in mind but two questions:

What does the majority desire?

What is for the best interest of the game?

The wishes of the members of the Whist Club have not been considered any more than those of any other body of expert Auction players.

A public ballot has been taken, and the approximately three thousand votes cast have been tabulated with laborious care and the sentiment thereby evidenced has been carefully studied. Correspondence

with prominent players and clubs in all parts of the country has been conducted and, in short, every effort made to ascertain and follow the public will.

The code which has been determined upon will revolutionize the play in numerous clubs, notably at the Whist Club itself, but the members of that organization have gladly agreed to cast aside some of their own pet hobbies for the sake of harmony.

A notable instance of this desire for uniform laws is shown in the case of The Racquet Club of St. Louis. Its large membership, whose average skill ranks at least on a par with any similar organization, voted unanimously for the retention of the dual value of the Spade, and yet assurances have been given by the leaders of Auction thought in that city that the new code without a Spade at two will be cheerfully accepted there.

It is to be hoped that this most com-

commendable example will be generally followed.

The arguments that "It does not make any difference to others what we do," and "It is perfectly reasonable that we should play our own game as we prefer it," are not quite sound.

An unimportant change in one club or community may seem trivial, but it merely paves the way for more material changes elsewhere, and in time the present confusion is bound once more to ensue.

As the Auction players in all parts of the country are so earnestly urged to adopt the new code in its entirety, it seems only fair that, at the very start, the Committee that has drafted it should take them completely into its confidence and explain the reasons which have induced each and every one of the changes and why it has seemed to be wise not to make cer-

tain other alterations which have been most forcefully urged.

It is to accomplish this object that this article is written.

THE SPADE TO HAVE BUT ONE VALUE

Of course, the most notable change is the elimination of the Spade with the value of two. Hereafter the Spade will have one value only, viz: 9. In other words, the Spade becomes exactly what the Royal Spade has been, but now that the lower value of the Spade has ceased to exist, it is unnecessary to continue the use of the term "Royal." It will, therefore, henceforth be possible to "call a Spade a Spade," and when a player does declare a Spade he names the highest valued suit, worth 9 points per trick, and one Spade, therefore, will overcall a bid of one in any other suit.

This innovation, of necessity, causes a

number of other incidental alterations; the dealer is henceforth allowed to pass and the law limiting his liability to 100 if he declare one Spade, ceases to exist, as it is obvious that as he now is not obliged to declare he is not entitled to any protection should he do so. It also naturally follows that if all four players pass, the deal is abandoned and the next player deals.

Another minor change incident to the Spade alteration is that in cutting, between cards of otherwise equal value, the Spade now becomes the lowest instead of the highest.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the adoption of the new laws is apt temporarily to produce one mistake. Players trained by years of experience to bidding a Spade with a weak hand, until they become accustomed to the new order of things are apt to continue to

make the Spade bid when they really intend to pass.

That is now a bid of a Spade at 9, but it is customary for courteous adversaries to allow such bid to be changed without penalty whenever the mistake is explained.

This custom, of course, will only continue until players become familiar with the existing conditions.

WHY THE SPADE AT TWO HAS BEEN ELIMINATED

The reasons which induced the Committee to take the radical step of eliminating from the game the defensive Spade and all the informatory Spade bids which the low value of two made possible, are doubtless generally understood, as no Auction topic has ever been more thoroughly discussed.

It must be conceded that a double value for the Spade is not a logical part of the

game and that when the dealer is allowed to pass, a defensive declaration is not necessary, possibly not even desirable. It is also unquestionably true that Spade bids of more than one have caused great confusion, as they have been accorded different meanings in different sections of the country; that many players for ethical reasons have refused to use them and that others have found them too difficult to master.

It, however, must also be admitted that the informatory Spade bids have many devoted advocates. The vote taken showed that out of the large number who rendered their opinion, only a very slight majority favored the abandonment of the dual Spade.

This majority was not in itself sufficient to justify so radical a change in the face of fierce objection, especially as it involved the discarding of a highly scientific system

of declaration, but the controlling arguments that influenced the Committee were:

1. The change materially simplifies the game. It makes it much easier for the beginner and the weak player. They need help more than the expert and the continued popularity of Auction may depend upon their support.

2. Supposing the sentiment to be about evenly divided, there can be no question that the support for the new system comes from those who have tried it; the opposition from those who have preferred to "stand pat." The Committee naturally believes the opinion of experience to be the more worthy of consideration. It may be mentioned here that exhaustive search has failed to disclose the existence of a club which has given the single Spade value a fair trial and then abandoned it.

3. It appears that the new system is

steadily growing in popularity and there is every reason to suppose it will continue to do so.

4. The adoption of the single Spade value seems to be the only method of securing complete harmony. The most enthusiastic advocates of the dual Spade are willing to surrender their favorite declaration for the good of the game, but it is obviously asking too much to request the devotees of the new plan to return to a system they have been glad to discard.

These considerations have sealed the doom of the dual Spade and the chances are that it is now buried, never to be resurrected.

It was a tool of great force in the hands of a declarer who had the skill requisite to its proper use, but the weak player found it a boomerang, and, being unable to use it himself, was inclined to be restive when others employed it successfully.

Its friends, for whom it has been a faithful servant, are loath to deprive themselves of its many and manifest advantages, but having been convinced that in so doing they are acting for the good of the game, they are willing to hasten the obsequies.

THE INCREASE OF SLAM VALUES

The one proposed change concerning which there has been but little difference of opinion is the increase of the value of the Slam from 20 and 40 to 50 and 100 respectively.

The vote upon this point was so overwhelmingly in favor of a change that even had the Committee not shared that opinion, it could hardly have taken a position so opposed to popular sentiment.

As a matter of fact, this change was nearly made when the 1913 code was adopted, and the successful test of the

increased values in England has now thoroughly converted those who then opposed it. The objection to it is that it increases the reward for holding potential cards; in other words, make big hands bigger. This argument, however, seems weak compared with the consideration that in a large percentage of cases a slam is only obtained by skillful play and keeping the reward at the old Bridge figure does not seem adequate when the increase of one hundred and fifty per cent in the value of the rubber is considered.

The new allowance for slam is exactly on the same ratio as the increase of the bonus and, therefore, seems quite proper. Hereafter slams will be worth 100 and 50 respectively.

A NEW SYSTEM OF BIDDING

Possibly one of the greatest surprises in the new code, especially to players who

have not kept in close touch with the trend of modern Auction thought, is the change in bidding values.

This alteration may be most concisely stated in the words of the law (45).

The order in value of declarations from the lowest up is Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades, No Trump.

To overcall a declaration a player must bid, either

(a) An equal number of tricks of a more valuable declaration

or

(b) A greater number of tricks.

Of course, it must be understood that the respective values of 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 for Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades and No Trump are not altered. From a love score it still takes three No Trumps, four of a major suit and five of a minor suit to score game, but in bidding any numerically higher declaration overcalls a lower.

Possibly the case which this will most frequently affect is in bidding Clubs against Spades. Formerly it took five Clubs to outbid three Royals, now four Clubs is sufficient under such conditions.

The Committee determined to make this change for the following reasons:

- (1) It simplifies the game.
- (2) It increases the competition in bidding and yet expedites it.
- (3) It eliminates a great percentage of insufficient bids.
- (4) It eliminates the possibility of innocently conveying improper information in the manner mentioned below.
- (5) It seems logical and popular.

Those who have carefully experimented with this proposition believe that with the rank and file of Auction players it will, in time, prove the most popular of the changes, as it does away with all the problems in mental arithmetic which

now exist in connection with the declarations.

Past and gone forever are such incidents as, after a bid of four Royals, some such very dilatory and improperly informatory conversation by the next bidder as: "Four Royals, that is four times nine. How many is that? Oh, yes, thirty-six. Now how many Diamonds do I have to bid to beat that? Six. Oh, that is too many. I do not dare to go so high. I pass."

It also eliminates almost all the insufficient bids with the unfortunate penalties that have been connected therewith.

NO MORE "WINNING LOSING RUBBERS"

In the past the question has often arisen as to who has won a rubber when the side that has taken the two games, even with the 250 added, has the lower total. As the laws were worded the players tak-

ing the two games won, but in fact their opponents were successful.

This has been corrected by altering the wording of Laws 1 and 10. The winners of the rubber, henceforth, will be the players with the higher total, even if the losers have won two games and received the 250 bonus.

Law 10 accurately explains this as follows:

“At the end of a rubber the side that has won two games scores a bonus of 250 points.

“The trick, honor and bonus scores of each side are then added and the size of the rubber is the difference between the respective totals.

“The side having the higher score wins the rubber.”

CARDS NOT TO BE EXAMINED DURING THE DEAL

Heretofore the etiquette of Auction has provided that a player "should not look at any of his cards until the end of the deal."

This is now removed from the Etiquette and incorporated in the Laws in the following form:

"A player may not lift from the table and look at any of his cards until the end of the deal. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score for each card so examined."

The reason for this drastic provision is that the suggestion in the Etiquette has not prevented players from examining their cards during the deal. This practice has caused many cards to be exposed, involving delay, and in some cases has produced the unfortunate sug-

gestion that a player who had seen enough to be convinced his hand would be weak might not object to then exposing one of his cards.

While the Committee can not conceive it to be possible that any Auction player would intentionally be guilty of so dishonorable an act, and while the laws are not framed for "crooks," or with the intent of preventing dishonest practices, it has been considered wise, by a severe penalty, to terminate this most undesirable habit and thus possibly save an innocent player from a most unjust suspicion.

It is to be hoped that players will aid in this by enforcing the penalty whenever the offence occurs.

A NEW PENALTY FOR A BID OUT OF TURN

Special attention is called to the wording of the Law 49. The portions of it which are new are printed in *italics*.

"If a player make a declaration (other than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, *may treat such declaration as void* or may allow such declaration to stand. In the last case the bidding shall continue as if the declaration had been in turn. A pass out of turn *or a bid declared void* does not affect the order of bidding, *i. e.*, it is still the turn of the player to the left of the previous declarer. *The player who has bid out of turn may re-enter the bidding in his proper turn without penalty*, but when he has passed out of his turn, he may only do so in case the declaration he has passed is overbid or doubled.

"*If a declaration out of turn be made and the proper declarer then bid, such bid shall be construed as an election that the declaration out of turn is to be treated as void.*"

This gives to the proper declarer the right, which he unquestionably should have, of bidding in his own turn and also prevents the possibility of his suffering by reason of his opponent's error. This case of a player being penalized because he has bid in his real turn after his left hand adversary has bid out of turn has been all too frequent in the past, it will not occur in the future.

A MUCH DISCUSSED LAW

Law 52 has probably caused more discussion than any other. It has now been clarified so as to make its meaning so plain that misunderstandings hereafter appear almost impossible.

It now specifically provides that:

A pass or double once made may not be altered, and that

No declaration may be altered after the next player acts.

Before such action by the next player a No Trump or suit declaration may be changed, but only under two conditions, viz.:

- (a) To correct the amount of an insufficient bid.
- (b) To correct the denomination but not the size of a bid in which, due to a lapsus linguæ, a suit or No Trump has been called which the declarer did not intend to name.

A NEW REVOKE LAW

Law 85a contains an entirely new idea. It provides that should the dummy leave the table during the play he may ask his adversaries for "the courtesies due an absentee." Should he make this request they cannot exact a penalty for any revoke made by the declarer during the absence of the dummy unless one of the adversaries has propounded the question the dummy might have asked had he been present.

The reason for this law is so obvious that an explanation is quite unnecessary.

A NEW LAW AFFECTING THE DECLARER

Law 86a is also new. It is a revival of an old Bridge statute, the absence of which from the Auction Code has caused some complaint.

THE NULLO

Among the changes considered but not adopted the Nullo unquestionably deserves first place, not because, as was the case two years ago with the proposed increase of Slam values, it was nearly adopted, but by reason of its great importance.

Upon this subject the Committee was at all times in perfect unison of thought.

Each and every member appreciated that, especially in certain sections of the country, the Nullo has attained a very considerable degree of popularity; that

with four experts at the table the Nullo adds greatly to the competition and skill of the declaration and the science of the play; that it transforms many deals from uninteresting "single bid show downs" to real contests. In short, the Committee collectively and individually is not only prepared to admit practically all that has been advanced as argument in favor of the Nullo, but also to concede that even more may be accurately alleged.

In the opinion of the Committee, the one fatal objection to the Nullo, the one reason that makes it impossible for the lover of Auction to seriously consider interpolating it in the laws of the game, is the vast amount of skill that is required to declare and play it successfully.

Statements to the contrary have been made, but long, arduous and painstaking experimentation has demonstrated that allegations of this character may only

be explained by ultra-Nullò enthusiasm or lack of ability to appreciate Nullò possibilities.

The real fact is that not more than one in a hundred of those classed today as "good players" can come as near obtaining the maximum result from the Nullò as he does in the ordinary game.

Match two really expert Nullòists against two well above the average players. Suppose them to be of such caliber that if they were playing orthodox Auction the experts would have a slight advantage, possibly from one to five per cent. With the Nullò incorporated this otherwise close and interesting contest would almost cease to be one of chance. The "experts" would slaughter the "average" players.

It is the element of luck that causes the Auction enthusiasm now felt by a very large percentage of the players of today.

Eliminate or materially decrease that element, and a large proportion of the "fans" will forsake Auction and take up some other pastime.

Auction is not Chess, and to introduce any feature either too scientific or too exacting must prove a fatal error.

True it is that quite a considerable number of Auction players are clamoring for the Nullo, but it is safe to say that a large percentage of these pro-Nulloists have never met players of the highest class, able to handle the Nullo in the most expert manner. Let them once do so for an extended session and for them the Nullo will not only lose all its attractions but become the one element in the game they would shun.

Were it possible to educate the majority of players up to a reasonable Nullo standard, the situation would be different, but,

alas, that is beyond the hope of the most sanguine; the millennium has not arrived.

The Nullo, therefore, today is the great and only cloud on the Auction horizon. Its general use must mark the beginning of the disintegration of the game. One by one, first players and then clubs would drop out of a game beyond their ability to master.

Fortunately, there is no present indication of any such happening. The Nullo is, apparently, losing rather than gaining ground, but it is, nevertheless, only fair to put the case before the players of the country in its true light.

The Committee, in considering the Nullo, had placed before it most able pleas that if it must be disregarded in the Laws it be made part of an alternative code. The same suggestion was offered in the case of the dual Spade.

This has not been seriously considered, because the Committee is thoroughly con-

vinced that the good of the game demands that but one standard be unfurled for players to follow and that the doctrine of simplicity be stamped indelibly thereon. A double code would increase, not diminish, the existing confusion and instead of standardizing the game in this country, would tend to produce the opposite result.

It is to be hoped the Nullo supporters will view the situation in the same broad-minded manner that the more numerous family of dual Spade advocates has promised to regard it.

OTHER PROPOSED CHANGES

One suggestion that found considerable favor with the Committee was that the value of the potential suit honors—that is, honors that count eight, nine and ten times the amount of a trick—be reduced to six, seven and eight times such value in order to offset the increase in the size

of the game by the marking up of the Slams. This might have been adopted had it not been that the small vote it received in the poll seemed to stamp it as unpopular and to indicate that taking favorable action concerning it would be flying in the face of public opinion.

The idea of still further increasing the Slam values when the bid is either 6 or 7 has a number of able advocates, especially among players of the highest rank. The scheme is that if 7 be bid and made it should count 250, 7 bid and a small slam made 200, 6 bid and made 150.

This failed to receive the approval of the Committee because of its tendency

- (a) To complicate the game.
- (b) To unduly reward potential cards.
- (c) To encourage wild bidding.

“Tiger” Clubs and Reverse bids were doomed by the infinitesimal vote they received, but even had they shown much

greater popularity in the poll it is not likely that the Committee, in the midst of its efforts to simplify the game, would have seriously considered measures which would materially complicate it.

A number of requests were received concerning the size of the revoke penalty. But as they were about evenly divided between those who consider it too severe and those who wish it increased, the Committee naturally determined it must be about right as it is.

Another point that received the consideration of the Committee was the question of whether when a player places his hand upon the table, claiming the remaining tricks or any portion thereof, that act should be considered the equivalent of playing to the next trick and thereby establish any revoke he may have made upon a trick which has not been turned.

Some time since the Committee ruled

that with the laws as they then stood the act in question was not a playing to the next trick, but that the adversaries had the right to request that the play continue and could thus establish the revoke.

Some players for whose opinion the Committee has the very highest respect have taken exception to this ruling and have asked that a provision be incorporated in the laws which would obviously reverse the decision. This the Committee has declined to do. The case in which the incident is most apt to occur is when a fourth hand player is sure to win all the tricks, provided the current trick should not be trumped by the third hand. He therefore must wait until the third hand plays. As soon as that player follows suit he pulls what he thinks is the winning card of that suit, plays it to the current trick and with the same

motion throws all the rest of his cards face upward on the table. It then becomes apparent that he has played a trump instead of the winning card of the suit that has been led.

This mistake cannot possibly benefit the player or give information to his partner. The partner is helpless; he has not time to protect himself by asking the usual question. To call such a play an established revoke seems to be an Auction hardship too severe to contemplate.

While the Committee would not knowingly approve any law or render any decision which would permit a player to benefit by exposing his hand, it believes it to be a detriment to the game to encourage a player who cannot by any chance lose a trick, to compel his suffering adversaries to waste time and mental effort determining the order in which a lot of worth-

less cards should be played. It does not appear advisable to encourage at the card table the manners which a cat displays with a mouse. The laws upon this subject therefore remain unchanged.

The Committee in offering its new code to the Auction players of the United States, wishes to assure all devotees of the game that it has endeavored to standardize Auction in this country by trying to meet in every respect what it believes to be the vox populi. It respectfully asks that the laws of 1915 in their entirety be given a fair and thorough trial.

METHODS OF DECLARATION WHICH MAY BE EM- PLOYED UNDER THE NEW LAWS

After the Auction player has thoroughly grasped and completely digested the radical alterations that the new laws have made in his favorite pastime, the first question that must present itself to his mind is "What methods of declaration should I use when I play the new game?"

That question cannot be authoritatively answered at this writing. The innovations have been tested so as to determine whether they will be improvements, but little thought has been given to the methods which the declarer must employ in order to most effectively display his skill.

There are many expert players who are ideal partners but who never originate

an idea; there are others whose playing ability is limited but who are prolific in suggestions. The former will not be of any use whatever in this emergency; the latter will offer many impracticable plans for every one of real value. Those who combine the ability to originate and develop along sound lines will, in due course, hit upon some system of bidding that the army of expert players will approve and adopt as its own and it will then become the conventional system.

In developing the American system of bidding its creators must appreciate that the general trend of Auction thought in this country is in favor of making the game as simple as possible, and consequently it will be hostile to any conventions that may seem unnecessarily complicated.

On the other hand, it must be realized that in abandoning the dual spade, ruling against the nullo and adopting the numeri-

cal overbid the lawmakers have accorded great recognition to the advocates of the simple game. It is possible to make even the most sound doctrine ridiculous by carrying it to an absurd extreme.

The expert class may be willing to sacrifice much to aid in making the game attractive to the moderate player, but it will rise in revolt should any effort be made to prevent the bidding of the suits that are left in the most informative manner possible. The declaration must be a scientific pastime, not a mere guessing contest.

In the play informative and conventional leads will still be used, the signal will be employed and in short it may be most emphatically stated that the methods of the past will not in any way be altered or affected by the 1915 laws.

With the bidding, however, it is very different. The abandonment of the lower

value for the spade materially limits the amount of information one partner may give to another, but it should not and does not curtail it to such an extent that expert declarers will not, in the future, be able to excel their inferiors in many ways.

Conventions which as nearly as possible will permit the two hands to be bid as one will still exist, but as every one of the five declarations now has potential powers, each bid will have a real meaning concerning the suit in which it is made and the only "invitation" will be that conveyed by the knowledge that the partner has at least the strength he has announced.

As it is now impossible to give any information by bidding spades other than that heretofore conveyed by declaring Royals and as the new system of permitting any higher bid to overcall opens up a new field, it is obvious that the most

pertinent of the many problems now offered for the solution of the scientific declarer may be stated as follows:

What substitute, if any, is to be introduced for the bids of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Spades, and how, if at all, is the added power given to the minor suits to alter the bidding?

These questions are yet to be determined and to attempt at this time to predict the ultimate outcome would be venturesome indeed.

But even this early in the new game a few self-evident indications of what the changes will be present themselves in such a way that it is impossible to suppose that experience will prove them to be misleading. They may be briefly stated as follows:

- I. An arrangement of bidding conventions so that partners with great strength in a minor suit will be able to fully avail**

themselves of the increased power given to that suit.

II. A slight readjustment of original No Trump declarations.

III. The determination of how a player holding length but not tops in a major suit may, without deceiving his partner, be enabled to bid a hand which is too strong to pass.

IV. The development of some method which in a simple and appropriate manner will announce the most important part of the information heretofore declared by the high Spades.

Without attempting to accurately predict what plans will eventually be adopted, it may be of interest at this time to give some consideration to the present treatment of these topics and to suggest a few ideas for the use of players until experience shall develop something more satisfactory.

WHAT TO DO WITH GREAT STRENGTH IN CLUBS OR DIAMONDS

The laws of 1915 place the two minor suits in a new and materially advanced position. Of course, after the contract has been fulfilled the count is the same as of yore and from a love score it still takes eleven tricks in either Clubs or Diamonds to score game. To that extent the situation is unchanged.

But when the ease with which the minor suits may be bid and the heights to which they may be carried are considered the proposition assumes a very different appearance.

The oft-fought battle between two strong Spade hands on one side of the table and two strong Club holdings on the other now develops undreamed-of possibilities. In the past the Club bidders would with ease go as far as three over two Royals, but the call of three Royals

necessitated a reply with five Clubs and that was apt to end the contest; if it did not, four Royals requiring six Clubs was sure to discourage even the boldest declarers.

Now when one added to the amount of the adverse bid is all that is required, many more Club and Diamond declarations will be played, many more games will be made in the minor suits and on many occasions they will be the instruments which will successfully push the adversaries to declarations beyond their power to fulfil.

It therefore seems to be more important now than ever before that the bidding of Clubs and Diamonds should be systematized with as great care as the bidding of a major suit.

When Clubs were worth but 4 per trick they were never used for any purpose except in the declaration to show

tops to encourage the partner to bid a No Trump. When they were advanced to 6 they assumed real importance. And since then there have been two schools, one of which believed short high Clubs, such a hand, for example, as:

Spades: X X X X

Hearts: X X X X

Diamonds: King, Queen, X

Clubs: Ace, King,

should be declared One Club in the old-fashioned way.

The other faction felt that the Club suit was worth treating more seriously. That it was of sufficient value at times to produce a game and that it always could be utilized as a forcer; they therefore advocated the doctrine that Clubs (just as all conceded to be the case with Hearts) should not be bid without length. At this time, as the conditions under which

the case was argued have ceased to exist, it is futile to discuss who was right or which doctrine was the more popular.

Unquestionably the abolishment of the informatory Spade would, if it stood alone, furnish a strong argument in favor of the employment of the old-fashioned informatory Club, and in consequence as that change in the laws was expected some Auction strategists, prior to the announcement of the new code, were experimenting with a system of the following general character:

One Club to show short high Clubs.

Two Clubs to show length and strength in Clubs.

Three Clubs to show a solid Club suit.

The new bidding value of the Club makes it very doubtful whether this system is really the best. For example three Clubs to show a solid suit was intended as an invitation to the partner to bid

two No Trumps, but now to overcall Clubs he must bid an equal number of No Trumps.

Then again a new element comes into the field. Heretofore long weak minor suits were never shown, never considered worthy of serious attention. Many are now wondering whether the new order of things will make them a factor in the declaration. The answer is that no one knows, but until some convention is established it will doubtless be wise to treat both Clubs and Diamonds as real suits, worth bidding on their own account and not merely incidents of declaration to be used for an ulterior purpose. If a Club or Diamond may be bid originally with but two or three cards of the suit in the hand, the partner can never carry that bid up and fight with it as he can if an original Club or Diamond be only bid

with the same strength that would justify an original Heart.

Of course there are many hands much too weak for a No Trump, such as:

Spades: X X X X
Hearts: X X X X
Diamonds: X X X
Clubs: Ace, King

that might be bid, if calling short Clubs were permitted.

It is doubtful whether such bidding would in the long run prove advantageous. A five-card suit headed by Ace, King may be called because the holder expects to take four trump tricks, two with low, two with high cards. But to announce strength with a hand one and one-quarter of a trick below the average must deceive the partner and consequently do more harm than good.

A simple system for bidding Clubs and

Diamonds is given below, it may prove to be well worthy of a careful trial.

*The Bid**The Holding*

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| | (a) Five or more headed by Ace <i>and</i> King. |
| One | (b) Five or more headed by Ace <i>or</i> King and one other honor plus another suit headed by Ace or by King accompanied by Queen or Knave. |
| | { (c) Four headed by Ace, King, Queen. |
| | (a) Five or more headed by Ace, King and Queen. |
| Two | (b) Six or more with the high card requirements essential for a bid of one. |
| Three or more | A hand which justifies the bid and informs the partner that a game is possible. Such hand must contain length in the suit bid, but not necessarily tops, side strength and reasons for attempting to pre-empt. |

Before passing from this subject attention is called to what must prove to be a

new feature in the declaration. It is that the two minor suits will hereafter be used much more frequently as original pre-emptive declarations.

In the past, attempting to shut out Royals with a minor suit was hardly worth while, but now either minor suit is just as effective as a Heart for that purpose. It is also just as useful as a major suit in attempting to shut out a No Trump.

HOW TO READJUST THE ORIGINAL NO TRUMP DECLARATION

This is the most obvious and possibly the most important problem created by the new laws.

It has always been recognized as one of the essentials of an original No Trump declaration that unless the hand contain a solid Club or Diamond suit it must have three suits stopped.

With such a holding as

Spades: Ace, King, X

Hearts: Ace, King, X

Diamonds: X X X X

Clubs: X X X

most players have been accustomed to bid two Spades. What are they to do in future? Only two possibilities present themselves—Pass or No Trump. To bid either of the major suits would be very misleading, as it would show length, and the partner basing his action upon that presumption might advance the declaration to dangerous heights.

The hand seems far too strong to pass, so most players will doubtless treat it as a No Trump and this at once would seem to open the door for a new class of No Trumpers; that is, hands with strength in two suits only.

This naturally raises the question of

whether this rule should only apply when the strength is confined to the two majors or should be equally applicable when at least one of the strong suits is a minor.

Unquestionably there is much greater doubt when a strong minor is a part of the holding.

Take for example:

Spades: Ace, King, X

Hearts: X X X X

Diamonds: X X X X

Clubs: Ace, King,

or

Spades: X X X X

Hearts: X X X X

Diamonds: Ace, Queen, Knave

Clubs: Ace, King

Neither of these cases is as indubitably a No Trumper as in the first example given, because another bid—viz., one Club—is a grave possibility.

The reasoning which makes it seem to be unwise, at least for the present, to recommend bidding either short Clubs or Diamonds has been outlined above, so for the time being it may be better to call all these hands No Trumpers. When, however, the strong suit contains length sufficient to justify declaring it and two suits are not stopped, a suit bid is much safer than a No Trump.

It is also probably wise in testing the new game to bid No Trumpers with somewhat lighter holdings than have hitherto been deemed conventional.

Many players will henceforth bid an original No Trump whenever they have either

- (a) Four suits safely stopped.
- (b) Three suits stopped and the hand contains an Ace.
- (c) Three King suits, two of which contain in addition either a Queen, Knave or Ten.

- (d) A solid five-card Club or Diamond suit and a quick re-entry.
- (e) Two strong short suits, one containing Ace and King or Ace, Queen and Knave, the other the Ace accompanied by either the King, the Queen or the Knave and Ten.

These five limitations comprise the minimum strength with which, even now, it would seem advisable to start with a No Trump.

Of course, in these days a conservative player does not become unduly encouraged just because his partner opens the declaration with a No Trump and consequently is not apt to raise without considerable strength; but when, as sometimes must be the case, there is substantial strength opposite the No Trumper it is essential that in either raising or doubling a player should have an absolute assurance that the original declaration was justified by something more than chance to "get to the No Trump first."

When playing the modern game a player who has called an original No Trump, and has a hand which fulfils any one of the five above-mentioned requirements, may listen with satisfaction to a raise by his partner. The latter is the responsible party if he take the original bid too seriously, but the calling of a No Trump with less strength than any one of the five minimums mentioned above, is, even in the present game, assuming too grave a responsibility. It is unnecessary to court danger in that way, as with such a holding going game is impossible unless the partner have a hand that he is sure to declare even in the face of weakness announced opposite to him.

HOW TO BID LONG WEAK MAJOR SUIT HOLDINGS

With a long weak major suit and some side strength the player who has grown

accustomed to the Spade bids will, in the future, feel like an orator who has by royal edict been limited to the use of monosyllables.

For the present the logical way to treat the situation would seem to be to provide that the bid of one of a major suit shall show exactly the holding indicated by one of a minor, but that two of a major shall give no positive indication concerning tops.

With a hand containing five cards of a major suit but not the Ace or the King and not sufficient strength to justify a bid of two, it is undoubtedly the part of wisdom to pass. A player should not under such circumstances worry over the deal passing. That does not seem to be as apt to occur in the new game as in the old. Now when a triple pass (to steal a football term) comes up to the fourth hand he should only allow the deal to be lost when he believes his bidding will permit the adver-

saries to score. In the days that have gone, when a Spade was passed twice the fourth hand had to consider whether he should attempt to score the 100 for defeating the declaration. Therefore it seems probable that more deals were then played at one Spade than will now be lost.

INFORMATORY DOUBLES

In the days when Auction was just beginning to take the place of Bridge we had "Informatory Doubles" and "Business Doubles." The former were doubles to show an adverse suit stopped, in order that the partner might bid No Trump. They were not intended to stand. The latter were the doubles of the present-day type, intended for revenue only.

At times the meaning of the two was confused and it also soon dawned upon the declarers of that period that the data furnished by the informatory doubles

was of more use to the adversaries than to the partner. So for years there have been no informatory doubles, now they may return in another and much more scientific form.

The idea is to adopt, as a convention, the theory that any double of an adverse bid of one is for the purpose of information only and must be so treated by the partner. Doubles of a bid of more than one are not affected by the new idea.

A double of one No Trump means "I have a No Trump also, probably a better one than the declarer who has, however, had the chance to bid first. I can count at least five tricks in that declaration." The double of a suit says, "I am strong in the other three suits and would have called No Trump had my weakness not been declared by my adversary."

Both these doubles are of great value. The double of a suit permits the partner

to declare one No Trump if he have the adverse suit stopped. If not, anything he bids must find material assistance in his dummy.

The double of the one No Trump enables the partner to show his best suit and with that information the doubler can determine what to do. This is a most important tool for a declarer to have against the light No Trumpers of the day and is always safer than bidding two No Trumps.

Of course, in the case of either double the partner may pass if the character of his hand should convince him that the double left in will produce a heavy penalty.

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